

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT NEW YORK TIMES LEAD EDITORIAL
FRIDAY DECEMBER 10 HEADED "PRIORITY FOR PANAMA."

2. THE 73D ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE PANAMA
CANAL TREATY LAST MONTH PASSED WITHOUT NOTICE IN THE
UNITED STATES BUT NOT IN PANAMA. THERE, STUDENTS AND
OTHERS STAGED CEREMONIAL BURNINGS OF THE TREATY, WHICH
GAVE THE UNITED STATES CONTROL OF THE TEN-MILE-WIDE
CANAL ZONE "IN PERPETUITY." FOREIGN MINISTER AQUILINO
BOYD ATTENDED ONE SUCH DEMONSTRATION IN PANAMA CITY.

3. SINCE THEN, MR. BOYD HAS WON AGREEMENT IN WASHING-
TON FROM SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER FOR ANOTHER
ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR A NEW CANAL TREATY, EVEN
BEFORE JIMMY CARTER BECOMES PRESIDENT NEXT MONTH, IN
AN EFFORT TO NARROW REMAINING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE
TWO GOVERNMENTS. BUT THE PANAMANIANs KNOW THAT ANY
SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS MUST AWAIT THE NEW ADMINISTRA-
TION.

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4. THE NEW CANAL TREATY IS, INDEED, THE MOST CRITICAL

ISSUE FACING THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE. UNLESS THE UNITED STATES IS READY TO CONCLUDE AN AGREEMENT THAT WILL PROVIDE FOR EVENTUAL PANAMANIAN CONTROL OF THE TERRITORY THAT CUTS THE REPUBLIC IN TWO, PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE WILL BE UNABLE TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE WASHINGTON POLICY FOR THE AMERICAS.

5. PANAMA IS THE ISSUE THAT UNITES VIRTUALLY ALL OF LATIN AMERICA AGAINST THE YANKEES AND THE ONE CONSPICUOUS SYMBOL REMAINING OF THE ERA OF WASHINGTON'S "BIG STICK" DIPLOMACY AND "MANIFEST DESTINY." LATIN AMERICAN SCHOOL CHILDREN LEARN, EVEN IF STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES DO NOT, THAT NO PANAMANIAN SIGNED THE TREATY UNDER WHICH THIS COUNTRY TOOK CONTROL OF THE ZONE AND BUILT THE CANAL. ANYONE WHO HAS VISITED THE GREAT WATERWAY KNOWS IT COULD EASILY BE DISABLED BY A GUERRILLA FORCE.

6. UNTIL RONALD REAGAN INJECTED PANAMA INTO THE BATTLE FOR THE REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION, THE FORD ADMINISTRATION HAD NEGOTIATED HONORABLY AND RESPONSIBLY FOR A NEW TREATY AIMED AT INSURING FREEDOM OF ACCESS TO THE CANAL AND AN AMERICAN SHARE IN ITS DEFENSE AGAINST OUTSIDE ATTACK, WHILE PROVIDING FOR EVENTUAL RESTORATION OF PANAMANIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ZONE. IT OUGHT TO BE THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S HIGHEST HEMISPHERIC PRIORITY TO BRING THOSE NEGOTIATIONS TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION.

7. IN CAMPAIGN DEBATE, MR. CARTER DECLARED HE WOULD "NEVER GIVE UP COMPLETE CONTROL OR PRACTICAL CONTROL" OF THE CANAL ZONE. BUT HE PROMISED TO "CONTINUE TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE PANAMANIANS," AND EVENTUALLY REVISED HIS "NEVER" TO "ANYTIME IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE." UNDER PRINCIPLES ACCEPTED BY THE LAST THREE AMERICAN PRESIDENTS HE HAS TO BE WILLING TO SET A DATE FOR RELINQUISHING CONTROL OF THE ZONE IF ANY NEGOTIATIONS ARE TO HAVE ANY CHANCE. MR. CARTER SHOULD CLARIFY HIS POLICY ON THIS MOST CRITICAL OF HEMISPHERIC ISSUES -- AND THE SOONER THE BETTER. END TEXT.

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